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INTERGOVERNMENTAL NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR
THE ELABORATION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION IN THOSE COUNTRIES
EXPERIENCING SERIOUS DROUGHT AND/OR
DESERTIFICATION, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA
Seventh session
Nairobi, 7-18 August 1995
Agenda item 3

IMPLEMENTATION OF URGENT ACTION FOR AFRICA AND ACTION IN OTHER REGIONS: COMPILATION OF INFORMATION

Note by the Secretariat

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. Paragraph 6 of the Committee's resolution entitled "Work Programme for the Interim Period" (document A/AC.241/L.24), adopted at its sixth session, invited

> "INCD members, United Nations programmes and agencies, as well as relevant intergovernmental organizations, to submit to the Secretariat updated reports on measures taken or planned for the implementation of the urgent action for Africa and action in other regions..."

2. The same paragraph requested the Secretariat to prepare a compilation of such reports for the seventh session. This note, along with accompanying documentation, responds to that request.

3. The note provides a brief summary of contributions from governments and organizations, highlighting the major points of submissions that the Secretariat received by 16 June 1995. The summaries concentrate on concrete new measures taken since the adoption of the Convention in June 1994 that were not covered in document A/AC.241/30. The summaries are divided into sections covering the urgent action for Africa and action in other regions, including world-wide activities.

4. For fuller details, the Committee can consult document A/AC.241/Misc.3. The addenda to that document will contain the full text of all submissions received, including those reaching the Secretariat after 16 June 1995.

II. MEASURES IN SUPPORT OF URGENT ACTION IN AFRICA

5. Namibia

(a) Initiation of phase II activities of the national programme to combat desertification, which was agreed at a workshop in 1994, under the auspices of the national coordinating body chaired by the Environment Directorate.

(b) Extensive public awareness activities, including fifty press and television pieces, a media workshop, a television documentary and special materials for World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought (Desertification Day).

6. Sudan

(a) Holding of a national awareness workshop 5-7 July 1995.

(b) Updating of the five-year National Action Programme (NAP) developed in parallel with the INCD negotiation process, along with an examination of the geographical extent of desertification.

(c) Issuance of a postage stamp to commemorate Desertification Day.

7. Canada

(a) Financial and technical support for the Permanent Interstate Committee for Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) in its role as focal point for the West African subregional action programme.

(b) Provision of resources totalling 18 million Canadian dollars to a Canadian non-governmental organization (NGO) in support of a programme to coordinate NGO activities related to desertification in the Sahel, as well as funds to enhance the capacity of five African NGOs.

(c) Publication of a three-volume review of fifty-six desertification control projects in Africa.

(d) Funding of participation of five African NGOs in the INCD process.

(e) Planning of a wide variety of programmes to support the development of NAPs, particularly by fostering local participation.

8. Finland

(a) Undertaking or continuation of thirty-four projects related to combating desertification in twelve African countries during the period 1994-1998.

9. France

(a) Approval in March 1995 of a project of 12 million French Francs to support CILSS activities related to the Convention, including 1.4 million Francs for the development of NAPs and of a subregional action programme for West Africa.

(b) Approval, also in March 1995, of a 15 million Franc project to support activities of the Sahara/Sahel Observatory (OSS) relating to information methodologies and networking of monitoring centres, to facilitate the development of information systems, data bases and research facilities related to desertification in Africa, and to strengthen the Regional Environmental Monitoring Centre in Nairobi.

(c) Launching of a research programme on irrigation systems, undertaken with research institutes in four Sahelian countries.

(d) Preparation of a project on forestry administration and fuelwood commercialization in rural communities in Mali.

10. Germany

(a) Activation of a DM 5 million "Enabling Fund", managed by GTZ, to assist affected African countries *inter alia* in reviewing past experience in combating desertification, in developing data bases, in strengthening institutional capacity, in harnessing local know-how, and in financing consultancy and coordination inputs needed for the conclusion of partnership agreements.

(b) Implementation of activities in Benin and Mali financed from the "Enabling Fund".

11. Japan

(a) A survey mission to Senegal to identify specific measures to support preparation of Senegal's NAP.

12. Portugal

(a) Technical assistance to Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique in the areas of rural development and capacity building.

(b) Participation in selected round-table meetings being set up as part of the urgent action in Africa.

13. Switzerland

(a) Implementation in 1994 of projects totalling 14.8 million Swiss Francs in the Sahel, Kenya and Ethiopia.

(b) Financing, provided through the Secretariat of the Convention and amounting to 250,000 Swiss Francs, for public awareness days to enhance understanding of the Convention in affected African countries.

14. United Kingdom

(a) Distribution, for use at twenty national public awareness days in Africa, of a Users' Guide to the Convention, now available in English, French and Spanish, aimed primarily at the NGO community in Africa.

(b) A grant to Earth Action, an NGO based in the United Kingdom, for a public awareness campaign on combating desertification in Africa.

(c) Assistance to the Government of Botswana for the development of its NAP.

15. United States of America (USA)

(a) Work with a number of governments and other donors to review past national efforts, define donor roles in NAPs so as to avoid duplication, ensure the most efficient use of National Environmental Action Plans (NEAPs) and similar frameworks, and identify practical measures to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought.

(b) Undertaking of an appropriate leadership role among donors in Senegal and Niger.

16. Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)

(a) Contributions to workshops organized by FAO member governments and subregional organizations in Africa to discuss preparation of action programmes.

(b) Special assistance to Mali, in cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Government of Germany, for national and subnational workshops, involving local populations, NGOs and international partners, to help formulate a NAP.

(c) Planned assistance to the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) for the development of a subregional action programme for East Africa.

17. International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

(a) Approval by IFAD's Executive Board of a pilot technical assistance grant programme to assist affected African countries during the interim period, with an initial allocation of $1.15 million.

(b) Approval of additional grant programmes focusing on research topics of direct relevance to the protection of fragile areas in drylands, and ongoing consideration of more programmes of a similar nature.

(c) Assistance to affected African countries, including notably Niger, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Mali, Uganda, Botswana and Ethiopia, in the preparation of NAPs, along with ongoing discussions on help to African subregional organizations.

(d) Enhancement of IFAD's institutional capacity through creation of a new Economic Policy and Resource Strategy Department concentrating on Africa.

(e) Approval since September 1994 of nine investment projects in affected African countries with a total value of approximately $180 million.

18. Sahara/Sahel Observatory (OSS)

(a) Adoption of the Convention as the strategic framework for all OSS programmes, along with appropriate guiding principles for OSS activities, including training programmes for African decision makers, a long-term monitoring network, and projects to strengthen African scientific capacity.

(b) Development of a specialized guide to the Convention for use by scientists, technicians and project managers.

(c) Strengthening of contacts between OSS members and African subregional organizations, particularly through a workshop held in Paris, 3-5 May 1995.

(d) Public awareness activities, including an exhibit and distribution of OSS documents.

19. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and its Office to Combat Desertification and Drought (UNSO)

(a) Earmarking of US$ 3.6 million from UNDP/UNSO resources to support initiation of national, subregional and regional action programmes and capacity building in affected countries.

(b) Collaboration with the Inter-agency Planning Group for Environmental Funds to develop innovative approaches to national desertification funds.

(c) Support for preparation of NAPs in twenty-four countries, including organization of national forums bringing together key participants in the process.

(d) Institutional support to the Organization for African Unity (OAU), as well as four African subregional organizations, in the preparation of regional and subregional action programmes.

(e) Support for "awareness days", celebration of Desertification Day and other public awareness activities throughout the Continent, including production of two videos on the problem of desertification in Africa.

(f) Organization of two regional training workshops for twenty-five affected countries, one in French and one in English, to enhance understanding of the Convention's provisions.

20. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

(a) Studies to analyse five river-flow regimes in Western and Central Africa and to identify major aquifers of the Sahara/Sahel region (in collaboration with OSS.

(b) Field projects on soil conservation, reforestation and alternative livelihoods, such as the Cooperative Integrated Project on Savannah Ecosystems in Ghana.

(c) Regional training seminars in the Sahel to enhance the scientific capacity of Sahelian countries in relation to desertification, as well as a Sahelian Education Programme on Drought and Desertification (in collaboration with the Sahel Institute).

21. United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)1/

(a) Provision of financial assistance to the OAU Ad Hoc Group of Experts (so far amounting to US$150,000), to some subregional organizations, African governments and African NGOs, including through the Interim Secretariat of the Convention.

(b) Provision of financial assistance through the UNEP/UNDP Joint Venture Agreement for activities related to the Convention and urgent action for Africa, mainly in West Africa.

(c) Identification of the components of UNEP's support in the field of information and awareness raising, coordination of Convention responses, enhanced partnership, and improved results at national, subregional and regional levels, for the implementation of the resolution on urgent measures for Africa in UNEP's draft Strategy-Horizon 2002, and in the Revised 1994-95 Desertification Control Programme Workplan.

(d) Adoption of the proposed UNEP Programme of Work for the biennium 1996-97 by the 18th Governing Council with a 9% allocation of the total Environment Programme budget to desertification control.

(e) Provision of the Secretariat of the African Deserts and Arid Lands Committee (ADALCO), and financial sponsorship of two ADALCO meetings: in Burkina Faso (November 1994) to develop a strategy for the elaboration of a regional action programme for Africa; and in New York (January 1995) to prepare and coordinate the participation of African States in the INCD's sixth session.

1/In addition to UNEP's own activities summarized here, the UNEP report contains a detailed overview of activities in support of the urgent action for Africa.

22. World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

(a) Sponsorship of a training seminar on drought preparedness and management in Western Africa in Banjul, the Gambia, 4-9 September 1995 and, subject to the availability of funds, of a similar seminar for the Maghreb countries late in 1995 or in 1996, as well as of a workshop on Sub-Saharan drought in Trieste, Italy 31 July to 4 August 1995.

(b) A feasibility study on the networking of institutions and agencies concerned with drought monitoring and early warning in Africa.

III. MEASURES IN SUPPORT OF ACTION IN OTHER REGIONS AND WORLD WIDE

23. China

(a) Establishment of a Senior Expert Consultant Group, consisting of academic and government experts, to advise the National Committee for implementation of the Convention.

(b) Creation of a National Desertification Research and Development Centre and a National Training Centre for Combating Desertification, to complement the National Desertification Monitoring Centre previously reported.

(c) Identification, as part of the five-year national action programme for combating desertification, of specific measures to reverse land degradation in different arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas.

24. Iran

(a) Formation of an Executive Committee of the National Committee to Combat Desertification, which will formulate the details of Iran's NAP, and a committee to organize the commemoration of Desertification Day.

(b) Participation in a meeting on action related to the Convention in the Asia-Pacific region, held in Rangoon 10-13 April 1995.

(c) Translation of the Convention into Farsi as part of its submission to the Iranian parliament for ratification.

(d) A special budget allocations for anti-desertification activities.

25. The Phillippines

(a) Launching of several country studies and a resource information management system that tracks activities related to the Convention.

(b) Mounting of seminars, workshops and public awareness programmes, some organized by the private sector, to enhance understanding of sustainable development issues, including desertification.

26. Canada

(a) Wide distribution of an information kit on the Convention, mailed to coincide with Desertification Day.

27. Finland

(a) A survey of Finnish development projects related to desertification, including contributions to multilateral programmes.

28. France

(a) Financial support for the International NGO Network on Desertification (RIOD).

(b) Translation of relevant issues of the Earth Negotiation Bulletin into French, in collaboration with the Agency for Cultural and Technical Cooperation (ACCT).

29. Japan

(a) Identification of desertification as one of the major areas of global environmental issues in the Japanese Environment Basic Plan, adopted in December 1994.

(b) A twenty-one percent increase, starting in 1995, in the national budget for research and other domestic activities related to desertification.

(c) Provision of financial support (US$100,000) and experts for the International Symposium on Sustainable Water Management in Arid and Semi-Arid Regions, held in Israel 15-19 May 1995.

(d) Production of brochures, posters and other public awareness materials in connection with Desertification Day.

(e) Drafting and publication of a preliminary Japanese translation of the Convention.

30. Portugal

(a) Participation in the Northern Mediterranean Regional Desertification Conference, held 26-28 June 1995 in Almeria, Spain to initiate implementation of the regional implementation annex for that area.

(b) Establishment of two national coordination groups, one for domestic activities related to the Convention, the other for external activities.

(c) Translation of the Convention into Portuguese, with distribution to Portuguese-speaking countries.

(d) Preparation of public awareness materials, including ones geared to the celebration of Desertification Day.

31. Switzerland

(a) Implementation in 1994 of projects to combat desertification in India and Pakistan totalling 2.5 million Swiss Francs.

(b) Financing of a study, organized in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Convention, of desertification in the Jordan Valley of the Middle East.

(c) Opening of a credit line of 1 million Swiss Francs to be drawn down in 1995/1996 to support Convention-related activities.

(d) Financial support, amounting to 50,000 Swiss Francs, for the production by the Centre for Our Common Future, in collaboration with the Secretariat, of a simplified version of the Convention.

(e) Support for the establishment of RIOD and for the travel of NGOs to INCD sessions.

32. United Kingdom (UK)

(a) A grant to assist in the financing of RIOD.

(b) Financing of a conference of regional NGOs in Asia organized by the Society for Conservation and Protection of Environment.

(c) Completion of a study on desertification indicators, particularly at the community level, carried out by the UK Natural Resources Institute and UNDP.

33. FAO

(a) Endorsement by the FAO Council of new measures decentralizing and refocusing activities on technology transfer to increase food production in food deficit countries.

(b) Organization of a joint seminar with IFAD in May 1995 on the preparation of NAPs.

34. IFAD

(a) Establishment of an Inter-Departmental Task Force to coordinate IFAD activities related to the Convention.

(b) Cooperation with the Secretariat and the Centre for Our Common Future, as well as financial support, for the production and distribution of a simplified version of the Convention.

(c) Organization of a forum on poverty and land degradation to discuss with forty NGOs how IFAD can work with them in the elaboration of NAPs.

(d) Collaboration with the Secretariat to prepare an international meeting on the importance of local participatory development programmes in the implementation of the Convention and to conduct a study on the enhancement of the flow of funds to the local level.

(e) Organization, in collaboration with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of a symposium on poverty and land degradation to celebrate Desertification Day.

35. UNDP/UNSO

(a) Initial discussions with eight Latin American and Caribbean countries regarding a review of existing programmes to combat desertification.

(b) Initial consultations with UNEP and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), as well as with selected Asian countries, regarding the preparation of NAPs.

(c) Collaboration with interested partners in the development of operational indicators for desertification assessment and monitoring.

(d) Initiation, with interested partners, of a global programme to facilitate information exchange on sustainable water management, as well as joint sponsorship of an international workshop on that subject.

(e) Development, with interested NGOs, of a conceptual framework for effective participation of NGOs in the NAP process.

(f) Conclusion of a new joint venture arrangement with UNEP, open to other partners, covering anti-desertification activities world wide.

(g) Contacts with two hundred twenty-five foundations, corporations and individuals to encourage private support for affected countries.

36. UNESCO

(a) Cooperation with other international bodies to monitor dryland ecosystems, including through the use of satellite remote sensing data.

37. UNEP

(a) Celebration of Desertification Day in Nairobi, on the theme "Drylands, Desertification and People", with conferences on technical issues, a poster display, paintings, a film show and a field visit to a Kenyan national project.